

American Literature
This Land is Ours
Projects

Directions: As a group select one of the following projects concerning issues raised in Chapter 4: *This Land is Ours*

1. Research one of the following places mentioned in the chapter - Alcatraz Island, the Indian Territory in Oklahoma, the Walloma Valley or the Omaha Reservation. Locate each area on a map. Develop a time line of your site's history from the beginning of European settlement in the U.S. to the present. List the inhabitants and/or owners of this property at different periods. In class discussion, compare and contrast the histories of these four areas. How do they compare today?
2. Explore the role of oral tradition in Native culture. Using the library or the Internet, research Native American storytelling (www.angelfire.com/ca/Indian/stories.html is a good place to start). In groups of three or four, choose a traditional Native American tale to tell for the class. Document the following: the Native culture that originated the tale; the original homeland of that culture; and the present tribal headquarters. Divide the tale so that each person in your group will recite a portion of the story to the class. Enhance your presentation with authentic visual representations of the tale or its cultural origins.
3. The trial of Standing Bear was a landmark legal victory for Native people. Still, Native Americans in the years following found the courts and the federal government ignoring their concerns. Research how activists used different methods to advance their cause during the 1960s and '70s. What events and issues compelled many Native Americans to give up on the government and take matters into their own hands? Create a time line or mural depicting important episodes in the recent history of Native Americans.
4. Invite a Native American representative from a tribe in your area to speak to your class about tribal history and culture. Be prepared to ask questions and share what you have learned.